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- By June Bold, on behalf of the Saskatoon Board of Trustees

THE TWO STREAMS OF DOUKHOBOR FAITH

My Son Kim who lives in Australia and I have spent considerable time on Skype and exchanging e-mails exploring what is a Doukhobor. Kim has researched this Question. As you know there are many published opinions. But what opinion is valid?

These many opinions are varied therefore confuse all those who really want to know. My hope is that this thorough research will provide clarity to the question what is a Doukhobor based on historical and current facts.

William Kanigan Saskatoon

The Two Streams of Doukhobor Faith

(Transcript Feb.7 2017) by Bill Kanigan and son, Kim Kanigan

Very often people will ask this question: What do Doukhobors believe? It is asked by those who come from within Doukhobor lineage and those who are outside of this background and want to try and better understand the heritage.

Often response to this broad question will begin with typically "Doukhobors believe that...." and the details to some extent will follow. Very often the person who is asking this question does not realise the answer they receive, which is usually stated as a "universal" response to the question is not truly a universal answer in most cases. There is not a set of universal answers one can receive to common questions regarding Doukhobor faith, because people do not recognise that there is not a universal following today within the blanket title of Doukhobor.

If one begins to study the historical documents relating to the Doukhobors, we can start to document inconsistencies between statements of faith, actions regarding beliefs, and even differences so large that they have led to great disunity and division within this group referred to as Doukhobors.

In studying this closely one can see there is not a universal consensus among this group of people, but actually there are two differing positions. So, we can refer to this as two streams of faith, not one. To say there is one universal set of beliefs within the Doukhobor community today is an oversimplification to what one can see by much evidence that there are two basic belief structures.

The two streams can be identified generally as Apostolic Doukhobors and Inclusivist Doukhobors.

These two streams of Doukhobors can be evidently identified when analysing the historical documents and once we are aware of this, the clarity and answers people are seeking, especially toward understanding why there could be much turmoil in the history of this group, not only conflict with authority outside the community, but also within.

First, for clarity, some definitions need to be established for this topic.

What does Apostolic mean? For this discussion, Apostolic refers to the set of beliefs followed by the earliest Christian followers. Generally, the original faith of the followers of Jesus, and what His apostles and disciples taught, believed, and practised. For time frame we can say the Apostolic age, as the early church of the first 100 years would have believed and practiced. References for this set of beliefs can be seen as recorded in the new and old testament scriptures. This set of beliefs holds exclusively to the early Christian teaching alone.

What does Inclusivist mean? An inclusivist is a proponent of inclusivism. A common definition we can reference for Inclusivism would be: The practice of incorporating disparate or unreconciled elements in a single, inclusive system or theory. So because we are talking about beliefs, we are speaking about faith and systems of faith. This means that unlike the Apostolic faith which is exclusive of any belief but the teaching of Christ and His apostles, an Inclusive faith permits inclusion of other belief systems and theologies into their faith. References for this stream of faith will include beliefs found in a great many sources of text, from many spiritual concepts which are not limited exclusively to early Apostolic Christian sources alone.

Also, this discussion is for the purpose of initial introduction to these two streams of faith, to help people interested in the Doukhobors to become equipped to identify these separate streams when researching historical documents or referencing contemporary information or discussions. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list of accounts, as there are a great multitude to reference which goes beyond the purpose of introduction. A few references will be given to help one identify each stream and this process of identification can then be used to analyse any document or position that may be encountered. It must be emphasised, this is not

to encourage further division within the community, but rather to provide a way of understanding and method of clarity for anyone who has been unable to reconcile why the Doukhobors have come to an increasing state of disintegration and dissolution since arriving in Canada. It is obvious to see the divisions are already there, so this discussion is not to create divisions but to clarify and identify them.

One may ask “why have I not seen this before?” and this is a very valid question which must be addressed. The answer begins with the knowledge that even though one can identify two separate streams of faith within the blanket term Doukhobor, there is some common ground. Probably the most obvious or visible common ground would be that of the non-killing of human life. If we examine many other divisions among people groups, in a great many cases, the divisions are easily recognisable due to the killing of one faction against another. Mass violence and killing between opposite sides provides an easily visible and identifiable split. Not so with the Doukhobors, as we will not see this blatant and easily recognisable evidence of division. The evidence of the two streams is there, and can be identified if you are aware of it, but if you are not aware, it can be missed because simply stated, they are not killing each other. This can be missed very easily by people outside the community, but it can also remain unrecognised today by many of the descendants of the Doukhobor heritage.

Why is this important? It is important to be able to recognise these two positions of faith in order to understand what each one is, and especially for descendants who wish to recapture their heritage in their lives today. Doukhobors are known as a people of conscience, therefore one needs to be conscious of what we choose to believe and practice. If we want to bring Doukhobor beliefs into our lives today, we first have to recognise

what these streams are, we then can choose consciously what we state as our faith, and we know why we choose to adopt it. Whichever stream we choose to follow, we are aware and conscience of our decisions. For others outside the lineage, it will better help to see the historical positions regarding faith that may have not been brought to light in current literature.

Tradition. A mention should also be made regarding traditions. Tradition does not necessarily equal belief. So we have to recognise that even though people may engage or participate in similar traditions, this does not mean that they all believe exactly the same faith. Practice of common tradition or simple ritual can be seen in the Doukhobors but this does not mean that all Doukhobors are unified in beliefs. What one will be able to see however, is how it is possible for these two streams to participate in common traditional assemblies or community life and in certain cases be unaware of the specific differences between each other, especially when considering the practices from village to village from the historical accounts from Russia.

Some general information from Russia should be discussed. People who eventually were to be identified as Doukhobors came from a variety of geographical locations, family lines, and backgrounds. These people shared a commonality of rejecting the authority and hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church and worshipped independently of that system. These people did have a name they called themselves, and it was simply stated a Christian or a follower of Christ. Over time these Christians were referred to by others from government and the Orthodox church as heretics, and numerous derogatory labels, one of them was referenced as those who wrestle against the spirit.

Eventually these people who previously only referred to themselves as Christians accepted the label of Spirit Wrestlers, but stated that they did not wrestle against the spirit, but with the spirit.

These Christians practiced a form of simplified worship which did not follow the hierarchy and veneration of icons which they rejected, but was more representative of the early Christian Apostolic church, being made up of smaller pockets of worshipers rather than a centralised structure such as the organised churches. There were many villages where this took place and there was a variety of distance and communication levels between these Christian followers. When referencing the numerous historical accounts of these people, we know that these simple Christian worshippers were eventually exposed to new teaching which was making its way through the villages by numerous travelling spiritual teachers and also the influence of Freemasonry has been documented. The level of teaching and exposure to each group or village from these influences is impossible to quantify but it is clearly seen that this was the case. So one has to realize that during the historical periods of the growing Christian believers who were breaking away from the Orthodox structure, taking with them traditional scriptural knowledge, there were also new groups and individuals visiting these villages and propagating their alternate theologies. Generally we can identify two types of influences. Mystic occultism similar to those as seen in the teachings of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Theosophy, as well as Luciferian doctrines of the Freemasons. These combinations of mystic and gnostic beliefs were being promoted throughout the regions where the early Doukhobors were settled and it can be seen that some of these communities accepted various portions of mystic and gnostic spiritualism into their simple Christian beliefs.

Testimonies recorded show this to be true and we can see that some people who identified with the Doukhobor label adopted mystic and gnostic beliefs while other testimonies clearly show the simple Christian beliefs as seen in scripture as practiced by Christ's followers of the Apostolic age. We can also clearly see that even though there were many illiterate believers, they had the knowledge of the new and old testament scriptures as this is evident within their testimonies and psalms.

With regard to the mystic and gnostic beliefs which some had accepted and began to include, one has to realize that the very nature of these teachings is much different than the open and plain teaching of the Apostolic Christians. The mysteries of ancient occultism and Luciferian doctrines of special enlightenment are by their very nature secretive, and even those in the same worship group will have differing levels of awareness of those who accept the secretive teachings. They are subtle by nature and very easy to conceal between worshipers and especially between villages. With this in mind we can show how a person can think they share the same belief as their neighbour but not realize that one is in the traditional Apostolic stream while the other person has adopted additional spiritual concepts and is now in the Inclusivist stream.

For example let's examine a few terms to see how this works.

If we were to ask an Apostolic Doukhobor what faith does his village follow, He would say "we are Doukhobors". If you ask an Inclusivist Doukhobor what faith does his village follow, he will answer the same "we are Doukhobors". So identifying a village as Doukhobor is not enough to recognise what they actually believe. This is why the Russian government and church were continually confused as to what exactly these people they accused as "heretics" believed.

If we ask "do you believe in Christ?" Both the Apostolic and the Inclusivist will reply "Yes." So this initially appears that they share the same beliefs, but this is not the case. If we ask rather "What do you believe about Christ?" then we will see two different answers. The Apostolic Doukhobor will say "I believe Jesus Christ is the only Son of God who lived a sinless life." Whereas the Inclusivist Doukhobor will reply something along the lines of "Jesus Christ was a good man and a good moral example for us to follow." So unless we ask the question correctly, we will not be able to reveal which stream of belief the person or community is from.

We can continue with numerous questions and the differences start to come to light.

If we ask "do you believe Jesus died on the cross?" Both the Apostolic and Inclusivist will answer yes. But, if we ask "what do you believe about Jesus death on the cross?" The Apostolic Doukhobor will answer "Jesus death on the cross has paid the price of my sins and is the means of my salvation." Whereas the Inclusivist Doukhobor will answer something like "Jesus was a good man who was crucified, but his death can not pay for anyone else's wrong doings."

If you ask, "is it important to be a good person?" Both the Apostolic and the Inclusivist will answer "yes, it is very important to live a morally good life." But if you ask, "What standard do you follow to know what is moral?" The Apostolic Doukhobor will answer, "we are to follow the 10 commandments and the teaching of Jesus Christ." Whereas the Inclusivist Doukhobor will answer something like, "the bible does have some parts which teach good morals, but there are many sources of writing that are just as valid like the Quran or Tolstoy etc."

If you ask, “do you believe in Jesus teaching?” Both the Apostolic and Inclusivist will answer yes. But if you ask, “what do you believe about Jesus teaching?” The Apostolic will answer something like “Jesus teaching was perfect and fulfilled the moral law.” Whereas the Inclusivist will answer something like, “Jesus was a very good teacher for his time, but we are in a process of spiritual evolution, so we are still increasing in our knowledge.”

If you ask, “did Jesus rise from the dead?” Both the Apostolic and Inclusivist will answer yes. But if you ask, “what do you believe about Jesus bodily resurrection?” The Apostolic Doukhobor will answer, “God the Father raised Jesus body and spirit from the dead and restored him with a glorified body, We will be also raised this way as believers.” Whereas the Inclusivist Doukhobor will answer something like, “only Jesus’ spirit was raised, the rest is a myth.”

If we ask “do you believe in life after death?” Both the Apostolic and Inclusivist will answer yes. But if we ask, “how do you achieve this?” The Apostolic Doukhobor will answer “by believing Christ’s death on the cross paid the price for my sins and we enter the kingdom by the grace of God.” Whereas the Inclusivist Doukhobor will answer something like, “we have to earn our own salvation by the good deeds of our life.”

There are many more questions that can be asked that show the difference between the two streams of Doukhobors, but even looking at a few, we can see that if you initially assumed all the Doukhobors had the same belief, you would not subject the faith to this level of scrutiny. You would just assess the faith something like this: Well, he comes from a Doukhobor village, He believes in Jesus Christ, and that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead. He says he believes in Jesus teaching and it’s important to live a moral life, and he

believes after he dies he will go to be with God like Christ did. Sounds like a Doukhobor to me..

So it is plain to see that unless one carefully assesses the beliefs of a person, presentation, or community, it is very easy to put all of the Doukhobors into the same pot, so to speak. Wherein reality these theological differences are enormous and incompatible. These differences eventually lead to division and disunity. The assumptions also lead to broad misunderstanding between individuals in the community as people from each stream just assume all the others believe the same things. The mystic and gnostic inclusions accepted by some are subtle and many do not recognise them. This leads to confusion and misunderstandings. Also, there has been an increase in the acceptance of these additional sources of mystic and gnostic beliefs by many of recent years, so if we look at the stated positions of faith today on many websites and literature, there is much more inclusion than there was in previous years. Inclusivism is very evident and can be easily seen as a completely separate stream than the traditional Apostolic Christian foundation.

For evidence of this for comparative purposes, one only needs to compare commonly available literature such as the formal 1934 Declaration of Named Doukhobors and see how it contrasts with today’s positions of faith as seen on the USCC website (<http://www.usccdoukhobors.org/>)

A few examples:

1934: We, “The Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ”, have been, are and will be members of Christ’s Church, confirmed by the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Himself and assembled by His Apostles. Today: acceptance of Jesus as one’s personal “Saviour”, not only goes counter to any rational understanding of the Christian teachings, but also defies common sense.

1934: We believe in and profess --- Jesus Christ the Son of God--- Who came in the flesh Today: The tendency of most Christian denominations to personify God ... is totally inconsistent with the spiritual nature of the teachings of Jesus.

1934: having been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Today: Doukhobors reject the notion that Jesus died for our sins; that His martyr death serves as some kind of "ransom" for the salvation of others.

1934: There is none and could not be any other name under the heavens --- through which man ought to be saved. Today: earning one's own "salvation"

1934: The law of God is expounded in the Ten Commandments Today: Biblical scriptures have recorded and preserved the knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus and other ancient teachers and prophets, and have thus contributed to the evolutionary development ... but no more so than any other written work ... such as the Tao Te Ching, Bhagavad-Gita, Upanishads, Koran, etc.... or the inspiring writings of many great teachers and leaders such as Gibran, Thoreau, Tolstoy, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Helena Blavatsky, Helen Caldicott, Eckhart Tolle and countless others.

1934: Following in the footsteps of our Divine Teacher Today: God" to be a term used to denote a spiritual energy force

We can compare not only the dispositions of Canadian history, but this can be seen in Russian historical accounts as well.

Russian ancestors provide personal testimonies showing very identifiable apostolic witness and inspiration. There are many historical accounts including first hand testimony of the people of Doukhobor heritage, testimonies of people like Gregory Ivanovich Sukharev, who endured unimaginable suffering because of their true belief in Jesus Christ and strict obedience to His

teachings of Apostolic nature and commandments in the bible, see:

<http://www.doukhobor.org/Sukharev.html>

This ancestor tells us in his own testimony why he did what he did, and where he received his strength to endure. " Because Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, strictly forbids the killing of people, and I believe in His teachings and wish to gratify His will" "this is contrary to God's law which says in the Sixth commandment "Do not kill" I wish to adhere to this Commandment, because I believe in and practice the law of Christ, and I serve Him only" During his immense suffering he told us how he endured: "always held before me a mental picture of the anguish of my Lord Jesus Christ, as a consolation and support to the strength of my soul" "we shall trust in our Almighty Creator, Christ the Saviour" "the great truth of the testament of our Lord Jesus Christ. His example in suffering the throes of anguish and torment on the cross gave me strength and confidence. I fervently called upon the Heavenly Father to give me strength to survive the ordeal"

It is very clear where our ancestor received his moral position and strength to endure. The Doukhobor's in Russia were subjected to suffering and anguish beyond any other testimony one can find, so they are the greatest example of people in Doukhobor heritage who lived out their early Christian faith by suffering in the same way as the early followers of Christ in the apostolic age.

Contrast this Russian account with another source we see today: (<http://www.spirit-wrestlers.com/>)

Doukhobor's read the Bible as a form of literature, not a sacred script. Jesus Christ is considered a good man, a human being who performed good acts. Sin and salvation through the blood of Christ are notions foreign to them.

In transcending the trappings of Orthodoxy and sectarianism (this means rejecting the church as an institution, even Jesus Christ as a God), Doukhobor's outdistanced much of Christianity and churchism.

Today it is more accurate to call them a social movement so even looking at a couple examples of commonly available sources, we can see there is a dramatic contrast between the traditional Apostolic Doukhobor's and the accepted beliefs of the Inclusivist Doukhobor's. Another aspect one can assess to help identify the stream of Apostolic Doukhobor's is that they are dedicated followers to Jesus Christ and simple early Christianity alone, whereas the Inclusivist Doukhobor stream will recognize or accept many other teachings and incorporate other religious concepts into their beliefs, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Gnosticism, Humanism, Theosophy and many other sources. So simply stated, Apostolic Doukhobors hold Christian faith alone whereas Inclusivist Doukhobors accept beliefs from multi-faith sources.

For clarity, common definition of multi-faith: To be multi-faith is to feel an affinity with aspects of more than one religion, philosophy or world-view, and perhaps to believe that no one is superior to the others. This term should not be confused with interfaith, which concerns the communication between different religions.

Following are a set of questions one can use as an exercise which will help determine historically either an apostolic position or an Inclusivist position. This can also be used to assess positions of the writers of contemporary literature or people engaged in discussion:

1. By what name did the group of people who became to be referred to as Doukhobors originally call themselves? a) Doukhobors b) Spirit Wrestlers c) Russian Spiritualists d) Christians

2. How did the Doukhobor's define their relationship to each other? a) Social Activists b) Religious Congregation c) Secular Community d) Christian Brotherhood

3. How did the Doukhobor's define themselves to the world? a) Social Movement b) Church c) Regular Citizens of the State d) Brothers and Sisters Loyal to Christ

4. Who was the head of the Doukhobor's? a) Mr. Verigin b) the Patriarch Pope c) Group of their Elders d) Jesus Christ

5. What was the primary law of the Doukhobors? a) Social and State Decree b) Church Doctrine c) Self Determined d) 10 Commandments and Commands of Jesus Christ from the Holy Bible

6. Where did the Doukhobors receive their source of spiritual beliefs? a) Church Priests b) Self Determined c) Various sources of writings, eg. Buddhism, Hinduism, Humanism, Tolstoy, Quaran, etc. d) Old Testament and New Testament Gospels of the Holy Bible

7. How did the Doukhobors worship? a) Church Rituals b) Transcendental Meditation c) Spiritual Self Evaluation d) Gather and Sing Psalms of Praise

8. Where did the Doukhobors receive the content for their psalms? a) Choir Leader b) Group of Elders c) Russian Folklore d) Holy Bible

9. What did the Doukhobors believe about God? a) Impersonal Cosmic Love Force b) They Can Become Gods c) No God or we can't know d) Heavenly Father of Jesus Christ

10. What did the Doukhobors believe about life after death? a) There is none b) Don't know c) Only for some d) All Human Spirit is Eternal

11. What did the Doukhobors believe about Divine Judgement? a) There is none b) Don't know c) Everyone is Rewarded in Heaven d) God

will Judge our Earthly Deeds and Reward or Punish Justly

12. What did the Doukhobors believe about sin? a) There is none b) Sin is a manmade concept c) Sin is subjective d) Sins are Thoughts and Actions Contrary to Gods Laws

13. What did the Doukhobors believe about forgiveness of sins? a) Don't need Forgiveness b) Doing Good Deeds will Erase your Sins c) All Sins are Forgiven so Doesn't Really Matter d) Jesus Paid the Punishment for Our Sins and God Forgives Us by his Grace

14. How did the Doukhobors believe they could receive forgiveness of sins? a) It's Automatic because God Loves us All b) Do Good Deeds and Give Money to Church and the Poor c) Ask a Priest as They can get your Sins Forgiven d) Acknowledge and Repent of your Sins, ask Forgiveness through the Lord Jesus Christ

15. What ultimate authority did the Doukhobors recognise? a) State Government b) Patriarch Pope and Church c) Subjective Self Determination d) The Lord Jesus given Gods Full Authority

16. Where did the Doukhobors receive their moral positions? a) State, Social, or Humanist Ideals b) Patriarch Pope or Church Priest c) Subjective Self Determination d) Teaching of Jesus Christ and 10 Commandments From the Holy Bible

17. What position did the Doukhobors have about war or use of force or violence? a) Will Participate if Government Makes Them b) Will Participate if Church says it's Justified c) Will Participate to Defend Themselves d) Never Participate for Any Reason Whatsoever

18. What reason did the Doukhobors give for non-violence? a) They are scared b) Someone Else will Fight if They Don't c) Doesn't Matter anyway as there will Always be Wars d) Jesus

Commands Love your Neighbour and your Enemy and a commandment in the Bible says Thou Shalt Not Kill

19. What was the position of the Doukhobors about voting? a) You Should Vote it's a Privilege b) Vote if you like c) It's Not Important, Someone else will do it d) Christians are citizens of God's Kingdom so we can only Vote Christ as a Ruler

20. What was the position of the Doukhobors about participation in government or politics? a) You should participate, it's Your Civic Duty b) Participate if you want c) It's not important, Someone else will do it d) Can't participate as Christians are servants of God and we can't Serve Two Masters

21. What did the Doukhobors believe about killing of human life? Can it be justified for any reasons? a) Yes, if in Self Defence, It's my right to Defend Myself b) Yes, if by Killing one, then more will Remain Alive c) Yes, if Necessary it's Survival of the Fittest d) Never, God made Every Human Being with Eternal Souls and Commanded us to Love Your Neighbour and Your Enemy

22. What did the Doukhobors believe about the creation of the world? a) Don't Know b) The Universe Creates and Destroys itself over and over c) Matter and Energy of Unknown Origin Gathered Together, then Exploded by itself and Organised the Universe by Accident d) God Created the Heavens and the Earth and All Living Creatures

23. What did the Doukhobors believe about the creation of people? a) Don't know how we got here b) By Random Chance created from Evolution from Simple Chemical Reactions c) God put a Soul into Monkeys then used these Animals to Create Man d) God Created Man and Woman in His Image and made them with a Living Soul

24. Were the Doukhobors vegetarians believing it immoral to eat animals? a) Yes, they believe the animals are “our little brothers” and have a soul too b) Only if there is Nothing Else to Eat in a Life or Death Situation c) Ok, but only if you were Sick or Weak d) Any Food is ok to eat if received in Thanks to God for His Provisions, Raising Animals for Food is ok if treated Humanely as Possible

25. Did the Doukhobor beliefs ever get formally recorded and published by their own leaders? a) No, they only had Oral Traditions b) No, but you can Read about them in the Media, there is Allot written about them c) No, but their Descendants write quite a bit of Information and Individual Opinions much more in Recent Years d) Yes, in 1934 the Leaders living in Canada Gathered together to Produce a Formal Declaration stating their Most Important Beliefs in Simple and Clear Language

26. Did anyone outside the Doukhobor community have opportunity to live among them and observe and record their established traditional beliefs? a) No, they only had Oral Traditions b) No, the Media has Many Reports on this but Only From the Outside c) No, Not that anyone is aware of d) Yes, Vladimir Bonch-Breuvich travelled by ship from Russia to Canada Living With Them and Recorded his Observations and Published “The Book of Life of the Doukhobors “

27. Why were the Doukhobors killed, tortured, imprisoned, and persecuted? a) They were Rebels Trying to Overthrow the Government b) They were Violent and Obscene Protestors c) They did Immoral and Corrupt Deeds d) They were Obedient to the Commands of Jesus Christ in Sermon of the Mount

28. How were the Doukhobors able to endure such extreme and lengthy persecutions without compromising their convictions? a) Social Support b) By practicing Meditation to manage

the pain and heartache c) They were physically very strong from their peasant farming lifestyle d) By holding to their Faith that Belief and Obedience to Jesus Christ until the end will bring Everlasting Joy in Heaven with God

29. What was the Doukhobors position about baptism? a) Don’t need Baptism b) You have to be Baptised by a Priest c) Babies should be Baptised d) Christians are Baptised by Receiving of the Holy Spirit when we Accept Jesus as Lord and Walk in Life Obediently with Him

30. What did the Doukhobors say about Jesus Christ? a) He was just a Man who Lived a Good Life Example b) He is dead c) Don’t know where He is d) He is the Only Son of God, our Only Lord and Saviour, who Died for Us and by His Precious Blood we are Saved, He Has Risen to Heaven

31. By what name alone did the Doukhobors obey and believe we ought to receive spiritual enlightenment and salvation? a) Buddha b) Vishnu c) Myself d) Lord Jesus Christ

Summary regarding these questions: For simplicity, the position of an Apostolic Doukhobor would be to answer d) to all of the questions above. An Inclusive Doukhobor position would tend to place answers found in a, b, or c to the questions, although depending on which and how much belief they have incorporated from other religions, there will be some variability amongst the answers of Inclusivists.

The Apostolic Doukhobors were Christians who received their spiritual understanding from the Holy Bible. They worshiped by gathering to sing psalms and praise to their only Lord Jesus Christ and God the Heavenly Father. They were baptised by receiving of the Holy Spirit sent by the Risen Christ. They were knowledgeable in old and New Testament scriptures from the Holy Bible and incorporated this into their oral traditions. They were obedient to the

commands of Christ in the Sermon of the Mount and Ten Commandments and lived obediently in the ways of Christ's instruction and examples. They placed the authority of Christ given by God above all things in their lives. They did not accept forms of rituals or impose legalism in their worship including strict vegetarianism. They walked in a personal relationship with Jesus and guided by the Holy Spirit, they did not need a church or priest official to advocate to God on their behalf.

They were citizens of the kingdom of God, followed Christ's instructions simply and obediently. Sustained by their strength of faith they were non-resistant and peaceful even to extreme persecution and martyrdom. They believed that God the Father is the creator of all things and made human beings with an eternal spirit made in His image. They believed their Lord Jesus Christ died and was risen from the dead and their spiritual salvation was due to the precious blood of Jesus Christ who died as payment for their sins and by their living obediently to Christ's commands and being guided by the Holy Spirit they would live in eternal Joy in heaven with God. They accepted exclusively true Christian beliefs and lived obediently to the laws of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

How did the Apostolic and Inclusivist Doukhobors end up becoming mixed together? This can be quickly summarised in looking at the situation in the order: Establishment, then consolidation, then migration. Historical documents show early establishment of the traditional Apostolic Doukhobors in Russia, but as we know, at the same period in history, there were numerous people travelling through Russian rural areas posing as "religious" men and pamphleteers. These various travellers were spreading masonic, gnostic/humanistic and mystic concepts in efforts of seeding the Russian villages with these ideas with purpose

of either establishing Freemasons into faith congregations or weakening the Russian authority. Some people from these villages believed portions of these modified gospel messages and adopted mystic or masonic ideas into simple Christianity and perpetuated them. When the religious sects including any called Doukhobors were identified, persecuted and forced together by consolidation in certain exiled areas of Russia, people mistakenly called them exactly the same name and did not recognise the differences between the ones who were following traditional Apostolic teaching or those who chose to include mystic teaching, or modified gospel, or masonic teaching. When the Doukhobor migration to Canada occurred, many people from originally different villages with differences in their theologies were brought together to Canada. All of these people were considered and treated only as a single group of people referred to as Doukhobors. So this is why we can see very evident differences between the belief statements as previously shown.

In conclusion, this brief discussion is for the purpose of assisting those who are asking questions about what do Doukhobors believe, and an introduction to some ways of identifying the positions and presentations of the answers one will receive. If we are aware that there is not a uniform consensus between Doukhobors, but rather two separate streams of belief which can be characterised as Apostolic or Inclusivist, then we can be consciously aware of what we choose to accept or reject into our own lives and what we will adopt or perpetuate in continuation of our personal heritage. In today's presentations we will see the trend of a wide departure from the traditional Apostolic Christian faith toward a broad acceptance of Inclusivist multi-faith belief. By understanding these differences, we can be assured that if a person chooses to follow in the traditional Apostolic Christian beliefs, they are well

grounded in this position historically regardless of whatever may become accepted, popular or promoted in many presentations we are seeing today.

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**Newsletter from the Doukhobor
Society of Blaine Lake to The
Dove**

Submitted by Karen Dagenais

Hello to all! Spring is here and everyone is looking forward to a greener landscape and the planting season. There is some information and a few upcoming events we would like to share with Dove readers.

The Blaine Lake Society held the Annual Meeting on February 4, 2017 at the Prayer Home in Blaine Lake. We had some changes to our Board of Trustees. Edna Androsoff, Agnes Murphy and Christie Dargin Linsley decided to step down. We thank them for their dedicated service. Elected to the Board were Mabel Androsoff and Cindy Popoff. Marion Burak continues as President, Karen Dagenais as Vice President and Jane Strelloff as Secretary-Treasurer. We also have Members At Large, Ron Kouznitsoff and Rick Rebalkin. Marion Burak is our representative to the DCSS.

We regret to say that there will not be a Spring Tea hosted by the Blaine Lake Doukhobor Ladies Club this year. There is still the Spring Raffle and tickets are available to be purchased. The Ladies Club did make Lapsha noodles in the last week of March and sold by pre orders. Thank you to those who purchased Lapsha. There is hope that this might be done again in the fall.

Peters Day will be held at the Blaine Lake Prayer Home on Sunday, June 18, 2017 at 10:30 am with a lunch to follow (outdoors weather permitting). We look forward to members of the Saskatoon Society jointly participating and we welcome all to attend.

The community of Blaine Lake is holding a Canada 150 Celebration on Saturday, June 24, 2017. The Society felt it was important for the Doukhobors to be represented at this community cultural event where there will be ethnic food for people to enjoy as well as entertainment. Along with other community groups who are providing food, the Doukhobor Ladies Club will have a table and serve Pyrohy of various types. The Ladies Club is also celebrating the milestone